

Claims

It is claimed:

1. A method of conducting a wagering game comprising:
receiving a wager to play the wagering game;
accruing a winning outcome based on a predetermined criterion;
providing an option to a player of the wagering game to redeem the accrued winning outcome at a time of the player's choice;
in response to the option being exercised by the player, displaying a winning symbol combination to the player; and
awarding a value payout associated with the winning symbol combination.
2. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein the wagering game is selected from the group consisting of mechanical slots, video slots, video poker, video blackjack, video keno and video bingo.
3. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein the predetermined criterion includes an occurrence of a pre-selected symbol.
4. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein the predetermined criterion includes an occurrence of a pre-selected symbol combination.
5. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein the predetermined criterion is selected from the group consisting of player data, a promotional event, a predetermined number of wagering games played by the player, a value amount played by the player, a value amount won by the player, a time of day, and a day of the week.

6. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein the predetermined criterion includes a pseudo random generated outcome.
7. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein a probability of occurrence of the winning symbol combination displayed in response to the option being exercised is substantially identical to a probability of occurrence of the winning symbol combination during play of the wagering game when the option is not exercised where all non-winning symbol combinations are excluded.
8. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein the winning symbol combination displayed in response to the option being exercised by the player is selected from among a plurality of winning symbol combinations displayed in a base game pay table.
9. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, wherein the winning symbol combination displayed in response to the option being exercised by the player is selected from among a plurality of winning symbol combinations displayed in a bonus game pay table.
10. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 1, further including incrementing a number on a counter display viewable by the player in response to accruing the winning outcome.
11. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 10, further including decrementing the number on the counter display in response to exercising the option to redeem the accrued winning outcome.

12. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 11, wherein the counter display is embedded within a bonus button, the bonus button enabling the player to exercise the option to redeem the accrued winning outcome.
13. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 11, wherein the number is a multiplier number, and wherein the counter display decrements to zero in response to exercising the option to redeem the accrued winning outcome, and wherein the value payout associated with the winning symbol combination is multiplied by the multiplier number to yield a multiplied value payout to the player.
14. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 11, wherein the number is a number greater than one, and wherein the counter display decrements by the number greater than one in response to exercising the option to redeem the accrued winning outcome, and wherein the value payout associated with the winning symbol combination is multiplied by the number greater than one to yield a multiplied value payout to the player.
15. A method of conducting a wagering game, the wagering game including a pay table defining a plurality of value payouts and a corresponding plurality of winning symbol combinations associated with the respective value payouts, the method comprising:
- displaying a first symbol array in response to receiving a wager from a player;
 - accruing a winning outcome if the first symbol array includes a predetermined symbol or combination of symbols;
 - incrementing a number on a counter display viewable by the player in response to accruing the winning outcome;

providing an option to the player to redeem the accrued winning outcome at a time of the player's choice;

in response to the option being exercised by the player, displaying a winning symbol combination and decrementing the number on the counter display; and

awarding a value payout associated with the winning symbol combination.

16. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 15, wherein displaying the winning symbol combination comprises rotating and stopping a plurality of symbol-bearing reels to place symbols on the symbol-bearing reels in a second array, the second array including the winning symbol combination.

17. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 15, wherein the winning symbol combination displayed in response to the option being exercised by the player is selected from among the plurality of winning symbol combinations defined by the pay table.

18. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 15, wherein the counter display is embedded within a bonus button, the bonus button enabling the player to exercise the option to redeem the accrued winning outcome.

19. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 15, wherein the number is a multiplier number, and wherein the counter display decrements to zero in response to exercising the option to redeem the accrued winning outcome, and wherein the value payout associated with the winning symbol combination displayed to the player is multiplied by the multiplier number to yield a multiplied value payout to the player.

20. The method of conducting the wagering game of claim 15, wherein the number is a number greater than one, and wherein the counter display decrements by the number

greater than one in response to exercising the option to redeem the accrued winning outcome, and wherein the value payout associated with the winning symbol combination displayed to the player is multiplied by the number greater than one to yield a multiplied value payout to the player.

21. A gaming machine having a wagering game including a player time-selectable bonus award scheme, the gaming machine comprising:

- a value input device;

- a display device; and

- a controller operatively coupled to the value input device and the display device, the controller comprising a processor and a memory coupled to the processor, the controller being programmed to

 - allow a player to make a wager using the value input device,

 - accrue a winning outcome based on a predetermined criterion,

 - provide an option to the player to redeem the accrued winning outcome at a time or the player's choosing,

 - display a winning symbol combination in response to the option being exercised by the player, and

 - award a value payout associated with the winning symbol combination.

22. The gaming machine of claim 21, wherein the controller is programmed to increment a number on a counter display in response to accruing the winning outcome.

23. The gaming machine of claim 22, wherein the controller is programmed to decrement the number on the counter display when the option to redeem the accrued winning is exercised by the player.

24. The gaming machine of claim 23, wherein the counter display is embedded within a bonus button, and wherein selection of the bonus button by the player causes the option to be exercised.
25. The gaming machine of claim 23, wherein the number is a multiplier number, and wherein the counter display decrements to zero in response to the option being exercised by the player, and wherein the value payout associated with the winning symbol combination is multiplied by the multiplier number to yield a multiplied value payout to the player.
26. The gaming machine of claim 21, wherein the predetermined criterion includes an occurrence of a pre-selected symbol.
27. The gaming machine of claim 21, wherein the predetermined criterion is selected from the group consisting of player data, a promotional event, a predetermined number of wagering games played by the player, a value amount played by the player, a value amount won by the player, a time of day, and a day of the week.
28. The gaming machine of claim 21, wherein the predetermined criterion includes a pseudo random generated outcome.
29. The gaming machine of claim 21, wherein the display device comprises a plurality of symbol-bearing reels, and wherein the controller is programmed to cause the plurality of symbol-bearing reels to rotate and stop to place symbols on the symbol-bearing reels in a symbol array.
30. The gaming machine of claim 21, wherein the controller is programmed to cause a video image to be generated on the display device, and wherein the video image comprises a plurality of symbols selected from the group consisting of video poker

symbols, video blackjack symbols, video slot symbols, video keno symbols and video bingo symbols.